



Half Moon Sword

Traditional English Sword Dancing

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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TWENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL NEW YORK SWORD DANCE FESTIVAL TO BE HELD
FEB. 13-14 IN NEW YORK CITY

The 25th Annual New York Sword Dance Festival will be held in New York City, on Feb. 13-14, 2010. The event will feature 15 teams, as the performing groups are known, in an exciting weekend of performances in public spaces around the city. The festival, which Half Moon first organized in 1985, was the first such event in North America to focus on English-style sword dancing.

"When we held our first Sword Dance Festival back in 1985, there were no other teams in North America that only did sword dancing," says Deirdre Bialo-Padin, a founding member of the group. "Now there are groups all over the U.S. and some in Canada. We feel that the festival played a part in expanding the popularity of the dancing. Some people even formed groups just so they could come to the festival."

Sword dancing is a winter celebration practiced in the farming and coal-mining regions of northern England, where the annual visit of the local sword dancers to the village homes was thought to guarantee good luck for the year. The Festival will feature both mystical, stately longsword and vigorous rapper sword dancing, with live music on fiddle, accordion, and other instruments. In both types of sword dance, the dancers are linked in a ring by the "swords" they hold in their hands while they work as a team to weave intricate figures and patterns without breaking the circle. The dances are thought to have roots in ancient rituals, traces of which can still be seen in these present-day displays of skill. Performances will also include Morris dancing, Molly dancing, and related English folk traditions.

This year's festival will feature the "home team," Half Moon Sword, and their many guests for a weekend of exciting and crowd-pleasing entertainment. The event will kick-off with an opening performance at the Staten Island Ferry Terminal in Manhattan on Saturday the 13th, and conclude with a grand finale in the

auditorium at the Brooklyn Museum of Art on Sunday the 14th. Additional performances will be held in numerous libraries, museums, churches, and other public spaces. All performances are free, although there is an admission charge to enter the museums.

A schedule of the performances follows. For more information, or to see photos, e-mail Yonina Gordon at yonina.ena@gmail.com or call (212) 569-4374. You may also check the team Web site at www.halfmoonsword.org, or contact the team at halfmoonsword@gmail.com.

**SCHEDULE FOR THE 25TH NEW YORK SWORD DANCE FESTIVAL
Saturday, February 13th, 2010 -- Manhattan (mostly)**

9:30 a.m.

Staten Island Ferry Terminal
Whitehall Terminal at 1 Whitehall Street @ South Street

1:00 p.m.

Jefferson Market Public Library
425 6th Avenue @ 10th Street

1:00 p.m. & 3:00 p.m.

South Street Seaport Museum
12 Fulton Street (between Front & South Streets)

1:30 p.m. & 3:00 p.m.

Dana Discovery Center
110th Street (between Fifth Avenue & Lenox Avenue) in Central Park

1:30 p.m.

George Bruce Branch Library
518 W. 125th Street @ Amsterdam Avenue

1:30 p.m. & 3:00 p.m.

Museum of the City of New York
1220 5th Avenue @ 103rd Street

3:00 p.m.

Brooklyn Heights Library
280 Cadman Plaza West at Tillary Street, Brooklyn

3:00 p.m.

Dwyer Cultural Center
258 St. Nicholas Avenue
(enter on 123rd Street between St. Nicholas Avenue & Frederick
Douglas Boulevard)

Sunday, February 14th, 2010 -- Brooklyn

12:30 p.m.

Half Moon Sword www.halfmoonsword.org halfmoonsword@gmail.com

Church of St. Luke & St. Matthew
520 Clinton Avenue, between Fulton Street & Atlantic Avenue,
Brooklyn

12:30 p.m.
First Unitarian Church of Brooklyn
Pierrepont & Monroe Streets, Brooklyn

12:30 p.m.
Old First Reformed Church
126 7th Avenue, between Carroll & President Streets, Brooklyn

1:00 p.m.
St. John's Episcopal Church
139 St. Johns Place, between 6th & 7th Avenues, Brooklyn

2:30 p.m.
Brooklyn Museum (auditorium)
200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn

TEAMS ATTENDING

Candyrapper, Boston, MA
Charles River Rapper, Boston, MA
Charm City Rapper, Baltimore, MD
Griggstown Lock Rapper Sword, Princeton, NJ
Green River Tap & Die, Greenfield, MA
Half Moon Sword, New York, NY
Marlboro Morris and Sword, Marlboro, VT
New Haven Morris and Sword, New Haven, CT
New Moon Sword, New York, NY
New World Sword, New York, NY
Orion Longsword, Boston, MA
Still River Sword, Still River, MA
That Long Tall Sword, Northampton, MA
Toronto Women's Sword, Toronto, ON

ABOUT HALF MOON SWORD

Half Moon Sword is an all-women's sword team, which has been dancing together since 1981. Their skillful dance displays have gained them a reputation here and in England for precision and fresh interpretations of traditional dances. Doctors, lawyers, educators, writers, and mothers by day, the women of Half Moon Sword share a love of this dance form with all its ritual and mystery. The festival is their opportunity to share the excitement of sword dancing with other dancers and the public. The name Half Moon is inspired by Henry Hudson's ship, the Halve Maen, on which Henry Hudson's voyaged to North America in 1609.